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COUNTRY Bulgaria

SECURITY INFORMATION

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SUBJECT State Rice Monopoly; Rice Section in Plovdiv

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1. Since 1949, all rice grown in Bulgaria has been produced by cooperatives for the State Rice Monopoly (Vsestrana Kooperatsia Meritsa).
2. In 1949, the Plovdiv Town Council owned 1,600 decarees of paddy fields. They decided to form a cooperative and took over all the paddy fields, an additional 5,500 decarees, in the Plovdiv suburbs on the banks of the Meritsa River. These became a subsidiary of the Vsestrana Kooperatsia Meritsa known as the Orizshte Kooperatsia (Rice Cooperative). A landowner, Nicola Kunchev, a non-Communist, was appointed president. The State Bank advanced an unspecified sum of money to the cooperative to enable it to start operations, and the first crop was harvested in late 1950.
3. This cooperative differs from the usual Bulgarian system in that the paddy fields remain the property of the members. The land, however, is worked on a cooperative basis.
4. As the work in the paddy fields is hard, dirty and unhealthy, labor is hired by the cooperative from among the tramps, vagrants, and gypsies of the Plovdiv area at the approximate rates indicated below:

a. Preparation of paddy field.....	700 leva per decare.
b. Ploughing.....	700 leva per decare.
c. Harvesting.....	600 leva per decare.
5. In 1950, 1,500,000 kilograms of rice were harvested and the whole crop was purchased by the State at fifty leva per kilogram.
6. After thrashing and preparation, for every hundred kilograms of "clean" rice, the State allowed the cooperative to buy back eight kilograms at ninety-six leva per kilogram. The cooperative was allowed to dispose of this rice as it wished and at whatever price it could get.
7. A part of this rice was divided among members on the following basis: the total weight in kilograms of rice bought back from the State divided by the number of decarees in the cooperative established the average per decare per member. Each member received this amount multiplied by the number of decarees he owned.

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8. In 1950 the figure for the weight of rice per decare came to approximately 15 kilograms. The remainder of the rice was sold on the free market at 500 leva per kilogram. Out of trading profits, each member was paid a bonus of 1,200 leva per decare owned. A member owning 20 decares would have received a total of 144,000 leva, including the bonus.
9. The majority of members, nearly all of whom are residents of Plovdiv, had other sources of income apart from the Rice Cooperative.
10. The members were satisfied with the outcome of the cooperative this year. It must be remembered, however, that there was a plentiful supply of water that season, which is not always the case. Also, no attempt had been made at improving the irrigation system which is extremely primitive, and should the flow of the Maritsa decrease during the 1951 season, the crop will be proportionately reduced.

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